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IN THE APPLICATION

OF

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AND

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FOR A

SEAMSAVER FOR DRYWALL

SEAMSAVER FOR DRYWALL

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention relates to drywall devices, and particularly to a device for preventing ridged butt joints between drywall sheets by recessing butt joints.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

10 The so-called "factory edges" of a sheet of drywall are beveled. When hanging drywall, it is best if the sheets are hung with these manufacturer tapered edges facing each other. The slopes of the edges form a slight recess that may be filled with joint compound and covered with a tape, then coated with joint compound to level the seam. However, drywall inevitably needs to be cut in order to adequately cover the desired area. 15 The cut edges are not beveled and form what is known as a butt joint. There is no recess at a butt joint as there is with the tapered beveled edges. Consequently, when an attempt is made to cover the resulting seam with joint compound and embed the tape to cover it, a slight hump remains visible and it is difficult to level the seam, a result known as ridging. This problem is

compounded by the natural settling of the wood used to construct the frame of the building. Over time, the ridge may become more and more defined as the wood settles, making the seam more visible and therefore more unsightly.

5 Attempts have been made to address this problem. One method involves "veeing" a recess by hand using a utility knife. However, as this may be difficult and time consuming, another more common method is to use a device placed behind the butt joint to create a recess which may be more easily concealed
10 without ridging. In spite of the availability of such devices, a professional may find that a different type of recess creator is necessary for the job. For example, if the joint happens to fall near a stud, it may not be desirable to attempt to force the drywall into a recess, as bending drywall braced too near an
15 immovable fixture might cause the drywall to break. Alternatively, the placement of other building elements, such as pipes, outlet fixtures, etc., may limit the amount of available spacing to install a device to create a recess in the seam.

U.S. Patent No. 4,237,669, issued December 9, 1980 to G.S.
20 Hunter, describes a bracket designed to be attached to and to extend horizontally between two studs. The butting edges between two wallboard joints can be nailed or screwed to the

bracket, thereby creating a concave area in the wallboard. This area would be filled with a joint compound and covered with tape, leveling the seam.

U.S. Patent No. 5,657,599, issued August 19, 1997 to R.J. Peterson, describes a rectangular elongated post with two end raised sections designed to be vertically attached across the two seams between a set of three rows of horizontal plasterboard sheets. The raised sections at the end of the post are screwed to the two outer plasterboard sheets. The elongated lowered section of the post is aligned with a butt joint between two plasterboard sheets in the middle row. The ends of these two middle-row plasterboard sheets are screwed into the lowered elongated section of the post, thereby creating a recess which may be filled with joint compound and covered with tape.

U.S. Patent No. 5,799,458, issued September 1, 1998 to M.R. Ferguson, describes a V-shaped back blocking device. The two adjoining edges of the butt joint are screwed into the V-shaped panel, creating a recess which may be filled and taped over.

U.S. Patent No. 6,108,990, issued August 29, 2000 to S.M. Klammer, describes a panel designed to be used as a joint support that creates a recess along the seam of the joint. The panel has two raised edges running the length of the panel. When two

sheetrock panels are screwed into the lowered middle section of the panel, a recess is created along the seam.

None of the above inventions and patents, taken either singly or in combination, is seen to describe the instant invention as claimed. Thus a seamsaver for drywall solving the
5 aforementioned problems is desired.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The seamsaver for drywall is a recess creating device available in one of three embodiments. Each embodiment is
10 designed to prevent the potential ridging and crowning of butt joint seams in different situations. The first embodiment comprises an elongate, rectangular panel with a single ridge attached on the front face, vertically centered and horizontally to one side and extending over one-half the length of the length
15 of the panel. This embodiment is used to create a one-sided recess. The second embodiment is identical to the first except that it has an additional ridge attached on the same face but opposite side. This embodiment is used to create a uniform recess across the seam. The third embodiment has no ridges but
20 comprises an elongated rectangular block of wood with a uniform, elongated dip running length-wise, which is used to create an

elongated recess running along the seam instead of across the seam.

The ridge may be formed in a variety of ways. The ridge may be formed by a block-shaped or wedge-shaped strip attached to the front face of the rectangular panel, or by a U-shaped channel or elongate, L-shaped angle in which the front flange of either the U-shaped channel or L-shaped angle is wedge shaped, being thicker at the outer edge of the rectangular panel and tapering to a narrow thickness towards the center of the rectangular panel.

Advantageously, the seamsaver is not attached to the studs. The newly created seam is therefore not affected by the settling of the wood in the frame of the structure.

The seamsaver embodiments are particularly useful for creating different types of recesses as needed in the variety of settings that may be faced while installing drywall. The location of studs, pipes or outlet fixture may make increase the risk of breaking the drywall if a recess is created too near the immovable fixture. The first embodiment should be used in such a situation so that the recess is created by bending only one side of the seam. The drywall sheet that is near the fixture remains flat, but the one-sided recess provides enough

indentation to be filled and taped to cover the seam. In other settings, the layout of the fixtures and positioning of the seams may require the use a narrower recess creating device. In such a situation, the third embodiment should be used.

5 Accordingly, it is a principal object of the invention to provide a seamsaver for drywall that creates a joint recess in a butt joint between drywall sections.

 It is another object of the invention to provide a seamsaver for drywall that prevents the development of cracks in
10 a drywall butt joint.

 It is a further object of the invention to provide a seamsaver for drywall for preventing cracks in drywall joints that is both easy to implement and economical in construction and use.

15 Still another object of the invention is a seamsaver for drywall that does not require a device attached to the studs, so that the drywall joint integrity is not affected by the settling of the wood in the frame of the structure.

 It is an object of the invention to provide improved
20 elements and arrangements thereof for the purposes described which is inexpensive, dependable and fully effective in accomplishing its intended purposes.

These and other objects of the present invention will become readily apparent upon further review of the following specification and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

5 Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a first embodiment of a seamsaver for drywall according to the present invention.

 Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a second embodiment of a seamsaver for drywall according to the present invention.

 Figs. 3A and 3B are perspective and side views,
10 respectively, of a third embodiment of a seamsaver for drywall according to the present invention.

 Fig. 4 is an environmental, perspective view of the first embodiment of the seamsaver according to the present invention partially installed.

15 Fig. 5 is an environmental top view of the first embodiment of the seamsaver for drywall according to the present invention completely installed.

 Fig. 6 is an environmental top view of the second embodiment of the seamsaver for drywall according to the present
20 invention completely installed.

Fig. 7 is an environmental, perspective view of the third embodiment of the seamsaver for drywall according to the present invention partially installed.

Fig. 8 shows an exploded view of an alternate configuration of the ridges in a seamsaver according to the present invention.

Fig. 9 is an exploded top view of the ridge configuration of Fig. 8.

Fig. 10 is a top view of the ridge configuration of Fig. 8 with the seamsaver completely installed to join two sheets of drywall.

Fig. 11 is an exploded top view of another alternate configuration of the ridges in a seamsaver for drywall according to the present invention.

Fig. 12 is top view of the ridge configuration of Fig. 11 with the seamsaver completely installed to join two sheets of drywall.

Similar reference characters denote corresponding features consistently throughout the attached drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention is a seamsaver for drywall, including three embodiments designated generally as 10, 12, and 14 in the

drawings. The seamsaver is designed to create a recess at a butt joint between drywall sheets, in one of three ways as shown in Figs. 5, 6, and 7.

Referring first to Fig. 1, the first embodiment 10 of the seamsaver is shown. The first embodiment comprises a wood panel 16, forty-eight inches long, between about four to ten inches wide, and about one-half inch thick. A ridge 18 is attached to the front face of the panel 16 on one side. The ridge 18 is centered vertically in its placement so that there is a space above or below the ridge 18, from the ridge 18 top or bottom to the corresponding top or bottom of the panel 16. The ridge 18 measures between about twenty-eight and thirty-four inches long, one-half inch wide and one-sixteenth to one-eighth inch thick. The seamsaver 10 is generally designed to be used with forty-eight inch drywall sheets.

As shown in Figs. 4 and 5, the first embodiment seamsaver 10 is designed to be used when the butt joint between two drywall sheets falls near a stud 30 or other fixture. After the drywall sheet 26 near the stud has been hung, the seamsaver 10 is placed behind the drywall 26 using five or six screws, equally spaced, linearly aligned and parallel to the seam, as shown in Fig. 4. Approximately five inches of the seamsaver 10

should remain exposed. The adjoining piece of drywall 28 is then hung. Approximately one-half inch away from the seam, six screws, equally spaced, linearly aligned and parallel to the seam are inserted through the drywall and into the wood panel 16. The ridge 18 of the seamsaver 10 causes the edge of the drywall sheet 28 to bend slightly inward, creating a one-sided recess as shown in Fig. 5. This recess may be filled with joint compound and taped for leveling purposes.

If there is no stud or other fixture nearby, and therefore no danger that the drywall sheet may break under stress, the second embodiment 12 may be used to create a fuller recess. The second embodiment 12 is identical to the first embodiment 10 except that it has two ridges, 20 and 22, on either side instead of one. The same steps listed above in the description of installing a first embodiment seamsaver 10 should be followed when installing a second embodiment seamsaver 12. The result will be a two-sided recess along the seam, as shown in Fig. 6.

Whenever space is short or the butt joint falls between two fixtures, the third embodiment 14 may be used. The third embodiment comprises an elongated block of wood, fifty-three inches long, two and one-half inches wide and one and one-quarter inches thick, as shown in Fig. 3A. A gradual, uniform

slope or concave taper runs along the length of the seamsaver 14. The slope begins two and one-half inches away from the edge of the seamsaver 14, reaches a maximum depth of one-eighth inch in the middle of the seamsaver 14 and ends two and one-half inches away from the other end of the seamsaver 14 as shown in Fig. 3B. In total, the slope is forty-eight inches long, as the seamsaver 14 is designed to be used primarily with forty-eight inch drywall sheets.

When installing the third embodiment seamsaver 14, one sheet of drywall is hung first. As shown in Fig. 7, the seamsaver 14 is placed behind the sheet of drywall 26. Approximately one and one-fourth inch of the seamsaver 14 should remain exposed to be attached to the second drywall sheet. Five to six screws should be used to attach the drywall 26 to the seamsaver 14. The screws should be linearly aligned and equally spaced and parallel to the seam. The second drywall sheet should then be hung and likewise attached. The resulting recess will run along the length of the seam, and may be filled with joint compound and taped.

In Figs. 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7, the ridges 18, 20, and 22 are shown as being generally square or rectangular in cross section. However, the cross-sectional shape of the ridges is not critical

to the invention, nor is the method of attaching the ridges to the elongate rectangular panel. Figs. 8-12 illustrate alternate configurations of the ridges, shown in the double ridge configuration of Figs. 2 and 6, although they may also be used in the single ridge configuration of Figs. 1, 4, and 5.

Fig. 8 shows the elongate rectangular panel 24 with elongate ridges 40 being attached to the sides of the panel 24. Panel 24 may be between four and twelve inches wide, and is preferably about forty-eight inches in length. Ridges 40 are preferably between twenty-eight and thirty four inches long, and are centered vertically along the side edges of panel 24. As shown in Fig. 9, the ridges 40 are substantially U-shaped channels, having front 42 and rear 44 flanges joined by a web 46, although ridges 40 may be J-shaped, if preferred. Rear flange 44 is substantially flat and planar, while front flange 42 is wedge-shaped, being thicker at the edge joined to the web 46 and tapering to a narrow free end. As shown by comparison of Fig. 10 with Fig. 6, ridges 40 serve the same function as ridges 20 and 22. Drywall panels 26 and 28 are attached to the center of rectangular panel 24 by drywall screws 48, the drywall panels 26 and 28 bending slightly over the protuberance 50 formed by the thickened, wedge-shaped end of front flange 42, thereby

forming a recess which is covered by drywall tape and joint compound 54 to cover the seam at the junction of drywall panels 26 and 28.

Fig. 11 shows another configuration of ridges 60 which are generally L-shaped in cross section. Like ridges 40, ridges 60 are elongate, being between about twenty-eight and thirty-four inches long, a front view being identical to Fig. 8 and therefore omitted. Ridge 60 is formed by front flange 62 normal to side flange 64, therefore forming an elongate angle iron shape. Like front flange 42, front flange 62 is wedge-shaped, having a thick edge at the junction with side flange 64 that tapers to a narrow fee edge. By comparison of Fig. 12 to Figs. 6 and 10, it will be seen the ridges 60 perform the same function as ridges 20, 22, and 40. Drywall panels 26 and 28 are secured to the center of rectangular panel 24 by columns of drywall screws 48, the ends of panels 26 and 28 bending slightly inward over the protuberances 50 formed by the thick outer edges of front flanges 62 in order to define a recess which is filled with tape and joint compound 54 to cover the seam at the junction of drywall panels 26 and 28.

Ridges 40 and 60 may be formed from any appropriate rigid structural material, such as wood or molded or extruded plastic,

and may be attached to the edges of elongate rectangular panel 24 by any conventional method, such as adhesive or fasteners.

It is to be understood that the present invention is not limited to the embodiments described above, but encompasses any and all embodiments within the scope of the following claims.

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